

## SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

audience. Three ambassadors from Pisa (including Benedetto Gambacorti, one of Piero's sons), and two from Lucca, had previously come to beseech the Pope to make peace with the Florentines. The Pisans had effected nothing; but to the ambassadors of Lucca, who had protested that the Lucchese had never forgotten how the Church had delivered them from the hands of Pharaoh, the Pope returned a most gracious answer. He said he loved their city, and was convinced that they had only entered the league under compulsion ; but he could see no possibility of peace between the Church and the Florentines, as they had not power to restore the cities and towns that they had induced to rebel against her, nor to indemnify her for all she had lost and suffered ; the vicar of Christ was bound to have peace with the contrite of heart alone, and not to encourage sinners in their sins.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, yielding probably to the united appeals of Catherine and the ambassadors of Lucca, Gregory ultimately delegated two cardinals, Pierre d'Estaing and Gilles Aycelin de Montaigu, to treat with the Florentine ambassadors.

But Catherine felt that her mission was a higher one than that she had received from Florence. Disavowed by the Eight, she was still in Avignon as the ambassador of Christ, to bid the Pope return to Rome and reform the Church. She continued at the same time to urge on what she regarded as the holy and pacific work of the Crusade. When his first prejudices were overcome, Gregory heard her gladly—the faithful Raimondo always acting as interpreter. In one of their first interviews, Catherine spoke her mind concerning the shameful vices of the Roman Curia, and the Pope, after a feeble attempt to rebuke her, listened in silence, and made no comment at the end, though Raimondo was amazed at the boldness and authority with which she had spoken. On another occasion, Gregory questioned her about his return to Rome. " It is not meet," she answered, " that a wretched little woman should give advice to the

<sup>1</sup> Despatch dated Avignon, July 17. Oslo, I. doc. 124. It is curious that the writer should make no mention of Catherine.